ISHMAEL

AND

OTHER ESSAYS

IN VERSE

HERBY

PS
3515
E597
I8

GTU gstoa

Gift of
Mrs. Douglas Evey
In Memory of

Compliments of
W. J. Hurley.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/ishmaelotheressa0000njhe

Ishmael

AND

OTHER ESSAYS

IN VERSE

BY
N. J. HERBY

1917
DeWitt and Snelling
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

CBPac

PS
3515
E597
I8

98805

CONTENTS.

Dedication	1
Life	2
Ishmael	3
To A Woman	7
The Choice	8
Buffalo Bill's Last Ride	9
Apostrophe	10
Robert G. Ingersoll	12
Poland	13
Genius	14
Hail Glorious Flag	15
To Adele Aus Der Ohe	16
Twilight	17
The Answer Of The Gods	18
The Undertow	19
Totila	20
Convention	21
Thos. H. Huxley	22
My Butterfly	23
Knowledge	24
To A Young Lady	25
Spring	26
Woodrow Wilson	27
Death Of The Poet	28
The Muse	29
Charlotte Gruenhagen	30
Night	31
The Water Maid	33
Bertha Bell	34
To A. B. C.	35
Ingeborg	36
The Earth And The Moon	38
Only	39
Voices	40
Death	41

"Shall best I guard her hallowed light
By sheltered service on her tow'rs,
Or strife with Mammon and the pow'rs
That hold humanity in night?"

George Sterling

DEDICATION.

As flies the homing bird at eventide
Against the setting sun, and will abide
In no unwonted place, intent to rest
Contented in its own, though rough-made, nest;

So fly, my song bird, on the wings of Night
Or Day across the world but to alight
And build your cherished home within the heart
Of those who love the strains you may impart.

In youth I found you by the wayside, weak,
With ungrown wings, when from your chirping beak
I could but faintly hope you might belong
To those whose mission is the Art of Song.

And as I send you on your wing-borne way
Untaught, half-fed, yet would I hope you may
Where e'er you fly some little comfort bring,
And find a friend that loves to hear you sing.

HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL

LIFE.

A life, they say, is but a graven chart
In the engraver's hand. Its features show
Here smiling landscapes, bright as childhood's glow,
There luscious orchards, nursed by Nature's art.

In scented vales rest Hope and Love, where part
The rugged mountain peaks that shadows throw,
Cooling the dale. Beneath in cadence flow
The subterranean rivers of the heart.

And here, enclosed in heavy lines, appear
The contours of a bleak Sahara's sands;
While round the coast the maelstrom's waters lave.

But by the sunny sea where sailors steer
Rich laden vessels back from distant lands,
Sits beckoning on the shore the silent Grave.

ISHMAEL.

I am the war-lord! Master of the world am I;
I stride the land, I wade the sea, and from the sky
I hurl my messenger of death on cowering town
To kill, to maim, to starve, to burn. My royal frown
Shall palsy all in fear. And my imperial arm
Shall wither field and orchard, and despoil the farm.
And on the future's tablets shall be writ my name
Where it shall shine with God's and with illustrious
fame.

No Alexander, Cyrus, Pyrrhus, Hannibal,
Or Ceasar, or Napoleon, or other shall
Approach my star of glory. For I stand a hero
Above the great Domitian, Herod, and Nero.
Their little cruelties were childish, few, and small
When measured by my labors in Ambition's call.

What! There is my crown which I have held from
God a gift,
And to my heirs with final glory hoped to shift.
How come before my soul these apparitions strange?
My crown, its golden lustre lately seems to change
And fade, and in its flaming jewels must I see
The agony of death, and hear the sufferer's plea?

O, Horror! Comes again unbid the cruel sight
Of sinking Lusitania! In the murky night
A sudden consternation, and the quivering ship
Stagger and lurch and plunge as if it felt the grip
Of death in watery deeps, with clammy arms that fold
About its victim like a python's deadly hold.

I see upon the sinking ship the deep despair
Of mothers, fathers, children; and I hear the prayer
Of agony and death. Go, go, thou crown, away,
I am the war-lord, I command thee, go, obey!

O God! There in another jewel's flash appear
A thousand imps of vengeful Hell that jibe and jeer
And point accusing fingers to the fruitless fields
Of France and Belgium. 'Tis but Destiny that wields
The scourge of war. I, I am guiltless of the blood
That cries to Heaven of vengeance for Life's ebbing
flood!

I am the ruler of the earth! Why should the rays
Of baubles so disturb me, that the passing days
Are pictured terrors, and the sleepless nights are filled
With awful shrieks until my bone and blood are
chilled?
Away, away, dread crown! I will not look again.
Ah! But I must. Thou drawest me with resistless strain.
There, must I see again the soul-consuming show,
The peaceful villages with burning shells aglow;
And shattered, shapeless bodies to my vision come,
And bleaching sculls upon the hillslopes of Mort
Homme!

God! Must I look once more into the jewel's glare,
And see the Polish plains deserted, burnt, and bare;
And homeless men that hopeless rove, who yesterday
Plowed peaceful, fertile fields, and saw their children
play;
Who trudge and stare today with wan and vacant eye,
While to the suckling babe the mother's breasts are
dry?

What of it then? Who prate of useless paper scraps,
Of treaties torn and broken? Know they not, perhaps,
That strength is justice, power is equity, and we
Are but the God-made arbiters of Destiny?

Ah! Now another jewel in its treacherous light
Brings to my harrowed mind and helpless eye the sight
Of driven, sullen slaves from ravished lands; whose lot
Is that of laggard, dull, yoked cattle. Well, why not?
I am dictator. If it be my royal will
To tell my oath-bound minion he must murder, kill,
He shall rejoicing slay his father, sister, brother
And lay unholy hand upon his trusting mother,
If I command. I hold the regency of God;
I am the bearer of his sceptre and his rod.

He by my hand shall "strafe" all the foes that dare
Raise impious hand 'gainst him and me; let them beware.
God's vengeance soon shall smite them, hip and thigh,
As smites the lightning's bolt from out the leaden sky.
To zenith heights my glory shall be flashing forth
As flashes the aurora of the wintry North!

O God, Great God! Yet must I see torn limb from limb
Sweet, cooing babes. Still in the jewel's glare the grim
Accursed Lusitania! And its visions bring
The cutting sword of conscience, like a poisoned sting.

The myriad dead, whose hollow eyes in vengeance stare
Into my soul with hateful gleam as if to tear
My heart. While bony Famine stalks throughout the
realm,
And on the sea sits grinning Death beside the helm.

O, that I were one of the laborers that come
At dusk with tired and trudging steps toward the home,
To eat the simple evening meal upon the board,
And talk of sheep and cattle, hay and harvest's hoard.
God, might I have one hour such restful peace as they,
Just one short hour, O God! Do grant me this, I pray.
One hour, that I might feel again the innocence
Of childhood's care free days, and cast these tortures
hence.

Thou answerest not, O God! Am I, then, Ishmael
Whose hand is raised against the world; on whom there
fell
The hand of all Humanity? The curse of Cain
Upon my head, and on my hand the crimson stain
Of ravished innocence? O, Moloch, Ahriman,
And Bel , and Typhon, hear ye, then, my plea, and
span
And gird the earth with cruelties and pains so new
And fierce that in imagination's soil there grew
No so luxurious flowers; and in deep Tartarus
Such tortures were unboasted. Ah! What ominous,
Prophetic writing in the ruby do I read,
That: "Mene, mene, tekel . . . ?" By high Heaven I
plead,
It is the crown, the crown; God! Do not crucify
An innocent! It is the crown, not I, not I."

TO A WOMAN.

Sweet woman! When I met you heart to heart
The hidden powers within the world I knew
That move the atom and that downward drew
The stars from out the welkin's farthest part.

The powers that move the world on busy mart,
And at creation's dawn enquickening blew
The breath of life; and from whose seeds there grew
The Soul's desire in beauty and in art.

Yet out of all the women you alone,
It seemed, Love's ecstacy so could enthrone
As would Life's yearnings fully satisfy.

And to resist your charm 'twere sin to try,
For in your eye's compelling depth I see
All forces welded into unity.

THE CHOICE.

Ye Powers of Earth! Ye Beauties of the World!
Come hither, speak of Beauty, Strength, and all;
And thou that wert from the Celestials hurled,
Show me the grandeur that obeys thy call.

Show ye to me the glories of the Sun,
When beams of Morning's light translucent glow;
Or at his noon, or, eventide begun,
When on the Ocean's brow his raylets flow.

Or show ye then to me the subtle Air,
That balms all creatures of the Earth and Sea;
The mighty Hurricane, whither it fare,
As Lightnings Vulcan-strong flash o'er the lea.

Or then the gorgeous, varied flowers that blow
In spring and summer, and the Woods and Fields;
How these their grace with lavish hand bestow,
And each to hut or palace beauty yields.

Or when the Night receives with open arms
Her countless children, glittering far in space,
Pressing, while Moonlight spreads its witching charms,
Them to her bosom in a fond embrace.

My Love, for whose embrace I scorn high Heaven
And laugh at Hell, is more than all; for she
To whom Love's sacred, matchless power was given,
Is lovelier than all the World to me.

BUFFALO BILL'S LAST RIDE.

A messenger rode with the eagle's speed
Across the plain on his dust gray steed;
Shouted to those on the village green:
"The redskins come. They are painted to kill.
Does any one know, or has any one seen
Where is Buffalo Bill?"

And one of the crowd, there, lifted his hand
To his broad brimmed hat with its leathern band
As, shading his eyes turning toward the west,
He looked at his guns. "I see on the hill
There 's going to be fun. They are passing the crest,"
Said Buffalo Bill.

And swiftly he galloped, nor deigned to wait
For others to follow, or man or mate;
For when he levelled unerring gun
The redskins knew it was sure to kill.
They yelled: "Turn back to the setting sun;
It 's Buffalo Bill."

------ ------ ------ ------ ------

And when there appeared from the Stygian shore
A charger whose bridle was red with gore,
The old scout nodded, and, grasping the rein,
Sprang into the saddle and then with a will
Through the Dale of Death into Manitou's plain
Rode Buffalo Bill.

APOSTROPHE.

God of the Universe! Hast turned Thine ear
Away from Earth's despair? Darest Thou not hear
The awful shrieks, the triumph shouts, the roar
Of all the furious World, that rise before
The firelit Heaven? Hearest not the mother's groans
Beside her dying child, whose low moans
Attest the waning life? Helpless she kneels
Kissing the shell-torn body. Crushed, she feels
Injustice pitiless, as with its hand
It scatters misery throughout the land,
Stifling all living things. Hearest not, O God,
The screams of children, whom the War-Gods trod
With scornful heel? Hearest not the last, low sigh
Come from the lovely maid, within whose eye
There glow e'en unto death the fires that burn
For him she loves, and for his hoped return?

Hearest Thou the lying of the war-lord's tool,
The jumbled gibbering of the mitred fool
For victory? As if the length of swords
Measured world-justice and the truth of words!

Or is, O God, Thine eye by age grown dim
Thou seest not on the welkin's blood red rim
The murder spear, by Mars in fury hurled
× ~~In~~ the bared breast of a helpless World?
The gaping trenches, like the mouth of Bel,
Opening to swallow in the maw of Hell
The sons of men? Seest not the fertile fields
Sown with the hatred of the war eagle's shields?
The bird of battle hovering o'er his prey,
Spewing fire-venom, rejoicing when he slay?

× Into

And seest Thou not the iron swordfish dive
With joyous grin beneath the wave and drive
Into the staunch leviathan his steel,
Piercing its heart? Nor in his conscience feel
Remorse; but music to his Vandal ears
Are prayers of agony, and shrieks, and tears.

Or is the poisoned air the last, foul breath
Of War-Gods in their insane dance of death?
And is the burning city's ghastly light,
Spreading its gruesome fire-tongues through the night
Freedom's and Brotherhood's heaven-holy fire;
Kings', emperors', tyrants', final funeral pyre?

Or is, Great God, this frightfulness the fell
Appearance of a passing, deadly spell,
That is to Gods a game of chess, with pawns
Moved forth on Cruelty's unfeeling lawns?
Or shall this pregnant Madness soon give birth
To a regenerated, free-made Earth?

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

IN MEMORIAM.

Upon a precipice the Lion lay,
Divinest of all creatures on the sphere;
Tranquil and strong and true, nor knowing fear.
Unmoved he was by noisy dogs that bay

The moon. Beneath the precipice the gray,
Thick clouds of clamor rose against the ear:
"Blasphemies on his Godless face appear;
Ha! We will kill him at the break of day!"

And so the baiting beasts the coming morn
Gathered about. And on the breeze were borne
Reverberating echoes of their hate.

But slunk away within the kennel's gate
The hounds. For when the Lion turned his head
The yelping pack in coward terror fled.

POLAND.

Hark! Ye sons of Poland, to the winds that softly
blow,
Scented zephyrs from the fields where Freedom's
blossoms grow.
Listen to the voices whispered over moor and fen:
"Back to Poland's soil is coming Liberty again."

Lo! Thy brother stands there, Poland, grasping Free-
dom's hand;
And the crown, blood-rusted, shall be banished from
thy land.
And the children of thy mothers shall be freemen
when
Back to Poland's soil is coming Liberty again.

See the Vistula uneasy under tyrant's oar;
Hear its gentle murmur rising to a thund'rous roar.
'Tis the song of triumph sung to freedom-loving men:
"Back to Poland's soil is coming Liberty again."

Hark! Ye sons of Poland, hark, ye mothers, maid-
ens, boys;
For Democracy is singing with exultant voice.
And the Polish Breeze is proudly whisp'ring this re-
frain:
"Back to Poland's soil is coming Liberty again."

GENIUS.

As leaps the Stream the tall cliff's edge, ice cold
And crystal clear, the mighty Glacier's child,
Profusely sprinkling rocks by Aeons piled,
Then with increasing swiftness plunges bold

Into the waiting Deep's enclosing fold
And, eddying, dimpled, clear, flows undefiled
In gently gliding curves 'mid flowers wild,
To thirsting Plants a life stream pure as gold.

Thus Genius leaps from unpolluted spheres;
Regarding nor the clamors nor the cheers
From multitudes that near its channel play.

Unmoved it passes on its tranquil way;
Refreshing with life-giving nectar all
The thirsty Souls that heed its quickening call.

HAIL, GLORIOUS FLAG!

Hail, Glorious Flag! The United States
Has walked with thee through Freedom's gates;
American men salute thy stars
To break forever Oppression's bars.

Hail, Glorious Flag! Thy stripes shall stand
Equality's emblem in every land;
With American men inspired to fight
For world-wide justice, for Truth and Right.

Hail, Glorious Flag! Where thy folds were spread
The thrones have tottered and Tyranny fled;
For American men stand staunch and true
Where wave thy colors, Red, White, and Blue.

Hail, Glorious Flag! On land and sea
American men the guides shall be
That lead the people from Thralldom's chain
To Liberty's mountain and Freedom's plain.

TO ADELE AUS DER OHE.

Charmer of human souls, O Music sweet!
Deep-rooted Ygdrasil, with branches far
Up-reaching to the Azure's farthest star!
Touched soul to soul, within thy compass meet

The deep-stirred Hearts of nations; and all greet
Thy favorite. No notes of discord mar
The dulcet sounds that float across the bar,
Whose waves to Music's rhytmic cadence beat.

From out her instrument about us soar
Voices of distant thunder's rising roar;
Again she plucks with gentlest touch of hand

Exquisite notes of mild and tender tones;
Like floating rose leaves, picked in southern zones
And strewn by children's fingers o'er the land.

TWILIGHT.

When the sun sets
And his last raylet frets
With glittering spears the western sky;
Fantastic shrouds
Woven from darkening clouds
Low on the outstretched Heavens lie.

The Mountain stands
And holds with reaching hands
The sunlight on its seaward side;
As if its Heart
Refused with day to part,
And feared the distant, droning tide.

Then slowly rise
Against the murky skies
The silhouettes of the naked pines
On yonder hills.
Weird mist the canyon fills,
And thought to fancies strange inclines.

Stealthily come
From their abysmal home
The playful Spirits of the Night.
The hiding scroll
From Heaven's lamps they roll,
And fill the world with mystic light.

THE ANSWER OF THE GODS.

Beyond the confines of remotest stars
Where blackness inconceivable controls,
Beyond where sunlight shimmers on the bars
Of Morning's gate; and where untiring rolls

Swift Sirius, I prayed. The answer came:
"Within each atom is from you concealed
A universe of suns. A world the same
With moons and planets circling unrevealed.

The stars which you with reverent eye behold
Throughout illimitable, eternal space
Are dust from God's ethereal flowers that fold

Their petals in the cosmic Night's embrace.
For limitless are both the great and small,
And God is All in One and One in All."

THE UNDERTOW.

At twilight I sit by the sea;
The sluggish waves roll to and fro;
A low diapason I hear-
The voice of the calm undertow;
The buzz of the day not yet passed,
Recurrent its tides ebb and flow
On the shore of the weary, worn mind-
I wait for the calm undertow.

TOTILA.

When Asbad raised his spear in thrusting poise
He heard with fiendish glee the indignant voice:
"Basest of dogs. Would you your master kill?"
And felt his demon heart within him thrill,

And harder threw the spear. He pierced the man
Who in the fights was foremost in the van;
Who was as far beyond his savage day
As is the sun's beyond the pale moon's ray;

Who had to friend and foe a manly heart,
Scorning deceit, despising cunning art.
He, loved by all the honest men and brave,

Was placed within a common, dismal grave.
His tomb, though robbed of his sepulchral cloths
Yet keeps the best and greatest of the Goths.

CONVENTION.

When Adam walked along the bank, he threw a
wistful eye
On Eve's sweet form of womanhood, and heaved a
deep, deep sigh;
Then boldly asked her for a walk. She stammered,
blushed, confused:
"Why, oh! but, how? I mean, I think, -we've not
been introduced."

THOS. H. HUXLEY.

IN MEMORIAM.

Thou, too, great master, passed to final rest
Where myriad kindred went their way before;
Nor didst thou fear Nirvana's silent shore,
Following glad thy mother's stern request.

Wouldst say: "To Nature's purpose it was best?"
But thou with Titan shoulder ever more
Pressed hard against the slowly yielding door
Of knowledge, to obtain its perfect test.

Truth was thy all in all, more than thy life;
Slowly she grew, as grows a trembling vine,
Until thou, fearless, made her battle thine.

A giant in the long, rewardless strife
Thou stoodst. Fearing thy keen Ithuriel
Phantoms of Dread and Darkness fled or fell.

MY BUTTERFLY.

In the sun's clear, shining ray
Flitted through the summer day
A bright butterfly and gay.

All my soul in gentle sway
Held she. Would it not allay
Heartaches if I caught her, pray?

On a rose she perched to play,
Promised she would ever stay,
Nor to distant flowers stray.

Did she wrong? I cannot say,
In the twilight's dusky gray
Vanished she far, far away.

KNOWLEDGE.

While ages roll their wonted course amid
Those worlds of worlds whose grandeur we conceive
But in the least degree; while men but weave
Escapes from burdens Life so wisely bid;

While kingdoms rise and fall; yet is the lid
Not lifted off true knowledge. Men believe;
But; then, perhaps they but themselves deceive,
For grudgingly tells Nature what she hid.

Why, then, should man his ignorance disguise,
And feign to know what never mortal knew?
Why should he not confess: "All to my eyes

Alike is wondrous, mountains, morning's dew?
The 'Great First Cause' I cannot e'en surmise,
Nor know I whence came first the starry Blue."

TO A YOUNG LADY.

Safe from the ocean's spray,
Nestling among rock-bosomed hills,
Where play the ever laughing Rills,
A peaceful garden lay.

Among its shady bowers
Spreading its fragrance sweet there grew
A rose as fresh as morning's dew -
The loveliest of flowers.

Winter his wonted wiles
In reverence to its beauty stayed,
For on its dainty bud there played
But nineteen summers' smiles.

The pausing husbandman
Said: "If I might transplant this rose
Life would be poetry, not prose."
And oft he paused again.

Yet stands this flower fair
Unguarded there; nor knowing fear.
Or shall perchance the twentieth year
Draw round it tenderer care?

SPRING.

Lo! The bowers
Stand in youthful array;
From the quickening Soil rise the Flowers,
Raptured drinking the day
After showers.

WOODROW WILSON.

Rises the Rock above the swirling sea,
Though oft the cloak of turgid waters rolled
Above its head and their enstrangling hold
Seemed but Destruction's treacherous decree.

However violent the tempest be,
However roaring are the Waves and cold;
The storms abate. Again the Rock shall bold
Stand forth immovable, unconquered, free.

The Gods have chosen in your hand to place
The fate of Empires, that your pen may trace
Unfading lines on Right's and Duty's scroll.

More sacred judgment awed no human Soul
Than this. Nor prince nor potentate till now
Such laurels bore encrowned upon his brow.

DEATH OF THE POET.

An artist hewed his sculpture, striking, bold
Into a promontory's fearless side
As fairies brought him models o'er the tide;
His chisel ever faithful to the mold.

And thus the story of the heart he told -
A bas-relief, a gallery world wide;
With one another myriad features vied,
Depicting here the dross and there the gold.

Thus was there written by the poet's pen
The story of the souls and hearts of men.
But when the Tomb the denerved stylus took

There was no sculptured work or written book
Could tell by chisel's or by writing's art
The story of the poet's soul and heart.

THE MUSE.

When I was young
And life's hot pulse was strong,
I saw her figure lifting tall;
Now o'er the moor
Would she my steps allure,
Sounding her soft, enchanting call.

O'er woodlands now,
Or o'er the Mountain's brow,
Her voice enticing, onward drew;
Umbrous her place
Of body, but her face
Clear-limned against Olympus' blue.

Gently her arm
Still draws with beckoning charm,
And love of her my heart-deep fills;
My suit nor done
Until my setting sun
Sinks in the sea beyond the hills.

CHARLOTTE GRUENHAGEN.

Gray-mantling clouds obscured the lingering day
And draped the bier-laid sunlight as a pall,
But silently disparted at the fall
Of night, and brought the youthful sky of May.

Stirred was all Nature by the witching play
Of Charlotte Gruenhagen. Rising tall,
Music's sweet Spirit leaped apathy's wall,
And on the sad a wreath of gladness lay.

No, tell me not it was the violin's sound
That thrilled alone. Her beauty, crystallized,
Timbred the tones that drew all hearts around;

As draws the steel, tempered and magnetized,
The iron core. From Heaven it seemed there fell
Sweet harmonies in an enchanting spell.

NIGHT.

Night, Still, Charming Night.
Opening thy volume from haunts of the east
After the turmoils of daylight have ceased
Callest thou gently to rest man and beast,
Night, Still, Charming Night.

Night, Infinite Night.
Wrapped in thy majesty, awful, sublime,
Thou wrapp'st in rev'rence each country and clime,
Leav'st in thy path never landmarks of time,
Night, Infinite Night.

Night, Beautiful Night.
O'er thy wide bosom the bright gems are flung,
Torches that 'neath the arched Heavens are hung,
Harps that with silvery chords thou hast strung,
Night, Beautiful Night.

Night, Deep, Silent Night.
Seem they more awful, the still midnight hours,
That when thy breath moves the leaf in the bowers
Feel we thy Spirit on soft zephyrs hovers,
Night, Deep, Silent Night.

Night, Answerless Night.
Into thy infinite realms oft we fling
Heartfelt emotions; yet thou dost not bring
Answer again on ethereal wing,
Night, Answerless Night.

Night, Sweet, Soothing Night.
Still, when the heart's cup of anguish o'erflows
Soothes thy deep stillness and grandeur its throes
When the great volume of day thou dost close,
Night, Sweet, Soothing Night.

Night, Nirvanian Night.
Then as thou lingering movest to the west,
"Take me with thee" is the sick Heart's request,
Vanishing into the deep sea to rest,
Night, Nirvanian Night.

THE WATER MAID.

She steps with lifted head and graceful poise
Toward Tamalpais, our Guard of State
And Keeper of the stone-hinged Golden Gate,
While with his weather-beaten locks she toys.

She greets with musical and sea-soft voice
That watchman gray, at dawn or evening late;
As greets the darting bird her cliff-perched mate,
With eye and wing expressing perfect joys.

From out the heart-deep of the southern sea,
Where laughing Waters mock the amorous Sun,
The flask she fills with nectar pure and sweet.

Each year the precious draught she brings; and we
Adore the maid. Hills, Valleys joyful run
And scatter flowers about her welcome feet.

BERTHA BELL.

Where the dell-crescent turns like a shell to the sea,
Where in age-hoary oaks builds the ever busy bee,
Where the maple's deep shade spreads its sombre, dark veil
My sweet Bertha sleeps peacefully, tender and frail.

Where the fern-girdled knoll bears a blossoming vine,
Where the branches of alder and birch intertwine,
Where the robins and thrushes their soft duets play
My sweet Bertha sleeps mild as a blossom in May.

Where the brook babbles forth as a gay, giggling lass,
Where it curves round her tomb to the sea's swelling bass,
Where Forget-me-nots blue-eyed stand guard at her grave
My sweet Bertha sleeps soothed by the brook's cooing vave.

Where the blue sky extends and the white cloudlets creep,
Where its image it paints in the sea's concave deep,
Where the Breeze sings sad requiems through bush and tree
My sweet Bertha sleeps near by the deep-moaning Sea.

TO A. B. C.

ON HER LEAVING STANFORD FOR CORNELL.

Why should we be so selfish? Yet we are,
That we the vantage others would debar
To live within the pleasant atmosphere
Of those whose friendship so we value here.

And with the dread departure seems to cloud
The sympathizing Sky. A grayish shroud
Veils close our oak-clad hills; our very Home
Grows dark, disconsolate until you come

With smile again. We, each a heliothrope,
Turn to Cornell; whence once again we hope
The sun for us 'll be shining in the east.

When friends from friends at last must part,
Fraternal Love stands forth disdaining art
And claims all to himself affection's feast.

INGEBORG.

Where Skagen's Gren juts far into the sea
And Kattegat is rolling in the lea
Behind the Danish plain; where Noekken plays
At night his low, disconsolate, sweet lays,
Between embracing Seas a castle stands,
Early the home of chiefs with lawless bands;
Woergaard its name. Above the portal's arch
In shade of moss-grown oak and stately larch
The traveler yet may read her husband's name
And hers, carved in the gray-blue granite frame.

------ ------ ------ ------ ------

The fires of Hades shone with lurid glare
Above the sooty hell-walls black and bare.
The iron Doors, the parched and sweltering Rocks
Resounded sighs and groans, roused at the knocks
Of Ingeborg's bold messenger who came
To find her husband in the gloating Flame.
"Let me," the servant spoke, "my lord behold;
Above on earth my lady has been told
He's of the damned. I must receive his word
To tell her what here in the Deep occurred."

The hump-backed warden hardly deigned to speak,
But swung ajar the door with grating creak;
Out strode the suffering Soul with bearing proud,
Smoke circling round about a gloomy cloud.

"What, man of Earth, have you with me to do;
Is not to know I'm here enough for you?"

"My lady sent me. She desires to know
How fare you in Perdition's realm below.
Give me some token back to earth, I pray,
To prove my message; nor must I delay."

"Full ill must every soul departed fare
In this domain. But tell her to beware.
Yon fire-eyed keeper said e'en yesterday
Her chair is all but finished. Also say
Her death bell yet may sound a peaceful chime
If she requite our spoils, repent her crime.
Now as a token take this little thing,
She knows it well, it is my wedding ring.
And when you tell her of this dreadful place
Say I implore her that she seek God's grace."

Thus spoke the Spirit while he slowly drew
A ring, and at the waiting servant threw
Its circling gold. As swift as lightning he
The hat extended, for he chanced to see
The ring flame hot with sulphurous fumes of Hell;
And burning through his hat it hissing fell.

Thence quickly sped to earth the messenger
And as the master's ring he gave to her,
Thus spoke: "My lady, here's a ring of gold;
'Twas hot as forging iron, now scarce cold."

"'Tis true, 'Tis true, I know the token well;
Speak quickly, speak the words he bade you tell."

"My lady, you're in danger of the doom,
For they, below in Hell, preparing room
For you, have made close to your husband's chair
Your own. My master prays that you beware."

"Ha! Nought it matters if below, above;
I care but for the sweet voice of my love.
If Heaven or Hell, it is the same to me;
Where is my husband, there I, too, will be."

THE EARTH AND THE MOON.

From bright Aurora's far abyss the tide
Rolled with the coursing Moon; each mighty swell
Of waters on the Earth's great breast to tell
Her constant love. Against her mighty side

Beat hard a quivering heart. The oceans wide
Expanded as she sighed; the moon beams fell
Full on her bosom; as tones of a bell
That fondly tremble round a blushing bride.

When Jove had finished the sweet virgin, Earth,
He caught the sprightly evening Moon as he
His love and courtship whispered in her ears.

Jove, thundering, banished him far from his hearth.
So when his lovelorn face we do not see
'Tis hidden in a rain of streaming tears.

ONLY.

Only a look from a lady fair,
But her sweet soul dwelt in her eye;
Snow white her teeth and silken her hair,
And her cheeks with the red rose vie.

Only a smile from a lady fair,
But its meaning came to me plain.
Bright as a ray it fell; would she care
If I gave her a smile again?

Only a touch from a lady fair,
But I felt her quivering hand;
Unspoken words as she pressed mine there
I could not misunderstand.

Only a kiss from a lady fair,
But her heart beat warm in the kiss;
Held me in rapture; since then I bear
In my soul only heavenly bliss.

Only the love from a lady fair,
But it lay in her warm embrace.
Held in her arms I tasted Love's rare
Inexpressible joys and grace.

VOICES.

Ghostly shone the full moon on the weird, haunted sea,
While the shuddering Clouds seemed in terror to flee.
Said the child: "Captain, what makes the waves here
so red?"
"'Tis the blood of the grim Lusitania's dead."

Rose the mist from the soil on the Flandrian plain;
Child and mother walked blood-watered field paths
again:
"Mother, what makes so choking the air and the sun?"
"'Tis the poisonous breath of the Vandal and Hun."

Strangely moaned the chill Wind in the mid-hour of
night
Through the shell-shattered trees. Spoke the child in
affright:
"Listen, father! These sounds are of anguish and
dread."
"'Tis the curse of the murdered; the voice of the dead."

DEATH.

Art thou a beast of prey that men should flee
With terror stricken face from thee away;
That they who hear thy low voiced call would stay
And hide as frightened fowl 'neath bush and tree?

They pit their hope 'gainst hope they may not see
Thy tranquil face; and would forever lay
On Life the burden of eternal day,
Nor pray to be in thy repose set free.

O Death, calm, gentle Death! The truest boon
To all the pain-yoked World. Never too soon
Thou camest, whether morn, or night, or noon.

'Tis blessedness to sleep and never dream,
Nor suffer e'en a transitory gleam
From vistas of Life's ever shifting stream.

GTU Library
PS3515.E597 I8
Herby, Nels Jensen/Ishmael, and other es
G
3 2400 00069 7841

PS
3515
E597
I8
LC Coll.

Herby, Nels Jensen
Ishmael, and other essays in verse

PS
3515
E597
I8

LC Coll.